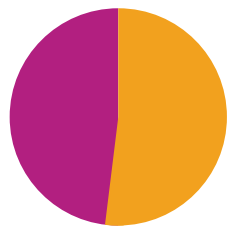


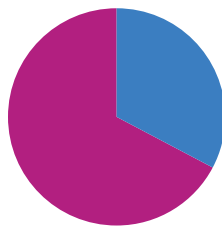


## Expand Assistance for Washington’s Working Families

Prior to the pandemic, the Washington State Department of Commerce found that over half a million children in Washington did not have access to licensed child care. This has a profound impact on Washington’s working parents. Nearly one in five parents report they have turned down a job offer or promotion due to child care issues, more often among Black and Native American parents.



Nearly half of unemployed parents say child care issues are a barrier to seeking employment



Child care consumes 35% of income for two-parents families in high-cost counties



Child care consumes 150% of income for single parent families in high-cost counties

Washington’s child care subsidy program for low income families, Working Connections, can deter working parents from accepting raises (or pandemic relief) because increased income often results in unaffordable increases in child care co-pays.

Meanwhile, the pandemic has made Washington’s child care crisis worse.

- Working families with school-age children are scrambling to find programs that will care for their children and support their remote learning.
- The cost to provide safe child care has increased dramatically because of low child-staff ratios to support physical distancing and the high costs of increased sanitation. These costs have been passed on to working families.
- The Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center found that families just beyond eligibility for child care assistance make up a disproportionate number of essential workers, making child care affordability a serious issue for the people we all rely on.
- Many families have turned to informal Family, Friends & Neighbor caregiving, particularly in communities of color, to help bridge the gaps in their child care plans. However, FFN caregivers have few resources to provide quality care and early learning for young children at the time when 90% of their brains are developing.



Child Care Aware of Washington calls on the legislature to invest in child care access and affordability in order to expedite our economic recovery from the pandemic, and:

- 1 Reduce copays for families eligible for Working Connections Child Care so more parents can afford to work
- 2 Expand child care assistance for families above 200% FPL so essential workers can afford to work
- 3 Expand supports for Family, Friends & Neighbor caregivers so they can provide critical early education